



# GREEN SCENE

Spring 2015

## REACHING NEW 'HEIGHTS'



**Thousands attend grand opening of Rowland Heights Community Center, where the state-of-the-art buildings and innovative programming rule.**

An estimated 2,000 residents enjoyed a Saturday morning celebration to mark the opening of Rowland Heights Community Center, as Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe and the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission joined the Department for the unveiling of the \$18.1 million facility.

Held April 18 to coincide with the 23rd Annual Safe Communities Festival at Pathfinder Park, the festivities included a live musical performance by Rowland Heights native and "American Idol" finalist Elijah Liu, along with free food tastings from local restaurants and program demonstrations.

"I want to thank the community for partnering with us to develop this beautiful landmark," said Supervisor Knabe. "Together, we have built a hub for this area, a place where people of all ages can learn, play, grow, get healthy, make new friends and have fun. My sincere congratulations and appreciation to everyone who put so much effort into creating this new, state-of-the-art, environmentally conscious facility."

Rowland Heights Community Center is located at Pathfinder Park (18150 E. Pathfinder Road). The 19,000 square-foot activity center and banquet hall are on the

lower level of the existing park. Amenities include two buildings on both sides of a grand courtyard, which provides ample space for outdoor events. The banquet hall building houses an approximately 4,400-square-foot multi-purpose room with a contractible stage, dance floor and catering kitchen, and will accommodate banquet-style seating for up to 300 people and performance style seating for up to 600; the activity center building on the west has a dance studio, an arts-and-crafts room, art gallery, social lounge, computer room, and meeting room. The lobby of this building also serves as a gallery to house permanent and temporary art exhibits. Three new tennis courts, a new basketball court, and additional on-site parking have been constructed as part of this project. The park area has been enhanced with new landscaping and walking paths.

An excellent place to host large-scale events, the center will also feature many low-cost programs and classes covering a wide variety of topics and interests ranging from yoga, martial arts, ballet and tai chi, to fitness for kids, computer classes and karaoke. Classes are set to begin in mid-May, and more information is available by visiting the center or calling (562) 691-1624.

For their contributions to the successful center opening, special thanks go to Joe Mendoza, Mika Yamamoto, Melinda Roundtree, Letty Guerrero and her team, Tim Tuyen, Kathy Medina, Jackie Richardson and William Hayes.

"We are thrilled to open this beautiful, multi-purpose community center to the Rowland Heights community," said Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney. "It is always our goal to deliver high-quality programming and recreational opportunities to the communities we serve, and this outstanding center is a prime example of that commitment."

Many sustainable technologies and design elements — such as natural light, solar panels, and drought tolerant landscaping — make the new center an environmentally responsible addition to the community. For its energy efficiency, the Rowland Heights Community Center is expected to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Rating. — **Catarah Coleman**

Special Awards Section Inside



# DIRECTOR'S DESK RUSS GUINEY

In this fantastic and hard-working Department, we come to work each day with our minds on how to best serve the 10 million-plus residents of Los Angeles County. That will always be our mission — but now we are adding a once-in-a-generation effort to collect ideas from the people we serve, so they

can play a vital role in shaping the future of parks and recreational opportunities.

With the first-ever Countywide park and recreation needs assessment, approved by the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 3, we have been given the opportunity to deliver a detailed study of the region's park, infrastructure and recreational needs. Led by Deputy Director Norma E. Garcia and Project Director Rita Robinson, the 15-month assessment process began in March and will include parks and facilities owned and operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation, those overseen by the County's 88 cities and others overseen by state and local agencies, town councils and not-for-profit organizations. The analysis will help us build a greater understanding of existing open space and recreation assets, and determine how best to improve, expand and make them more easily accessible to residents in all areas of the County.

By fall, we will kick off the most crucial phase of the assessment process: community outreach. A premium will be placed on collaboration and feedback from residents and park staff in cities and County unincorporated areas. Through community workshops and online portals, residents will be invited to provide their points of view on the needs and desires in their own communities.

That's where all of you come in! We are counting on you to help spread the word about the assessment in the communities where you work, and to encourage park visitors and program participants to take part in this important process. More information, including a regularly-updated schedule of events and opportunities to provide input, can be found at [lacountyparkneeds.org](http://lacountyparkneeds.org).

My deepest thanks for all that you do to help reinforce the message that "Parks Make Life Better!"

## Rah-Rah Meet

A noteworthy milestone was reached on Saturday, Jan. 24: the East Agency held its 20th Annual Cheer-Off at the Industry Hills Expo Center in City of Industry.

Representing a number of East Agency parks, about 50 cheerleading teams took part in the competition. Hosted at a number of parks, participants in East Agency cheer programs range in age from 3-17. The event is the culmination of the yearly cheer season, which begins in summer and runs for several months. This year's overall winner: the San Angelo Park Sparks (pictured)!

Formerly held at the East Los Angeles Civic Center, the program's explosive growth forced organizers to move the Cheer-Off to the much larger venue for the last five years.

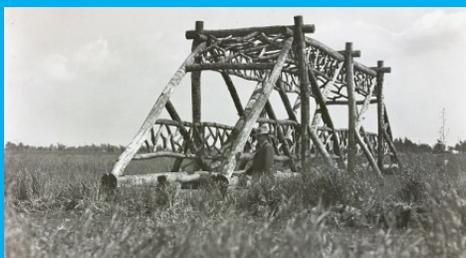
"Cheerleading is extremely popular at our parks," said East Agency Deputy Director Frank Gonzales. "Normally, these types of programs do not readily exist in low-income communities, because they can be costly — but our department has made cheer programs available to hundreds of children at a very low cost. The program is not only about having fun; it teaches children



discipline and how to be team players. It also makes them feel part of something bigger, teaches sportsmanship and encourages them to stay on the path to success through positive extracurricular activities. I want to thank all of the recreation leaders, park supervisors and everyone who is responsible for making this program such a success for two decades!"

— Alba Ibarra

## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT



# IS THIS ???????

ANSWER ON PAGE 4

# MOVIE STAR



*Fitted with state-of-the-art theater room, new community center heralds new day at Helen Keller Park.*



With a wide range of programs planned, a 4,000-square-foot community center at Helen Keller Park in South Los Angeles opened to the public on Dec. 10. Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas joined the Department of Parks and Recreation for a grand opening celebration at the center located at 1045 W. 126<sup>th</sup> Street in Los Angeles.

Hundreds of guests joined in the celebration, which featured several guest speakers and a surprise appearance by characters from "The Lego Movie."

At a park widely-recognized for its series of free film screenings, amenities at the new Helen Keller Community Center include a state-of-the-art theater room with a 5 x 9 foot screen and surround sound. Also open now: a new computer lab, arts-and-crafts room, outdoor patio, staff offices, full kitchen and reception area.

"While construction at Helen Keller Park is underway, we want the West Athens community to start enjoying the

community center during the holiday season," Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said. "We invite residents and visitors to explore this new amenity and participate in the vast array of activities that will be scheduled at the center."

A number of programs and activities will be offered at the \$7.3 million center, including a low-cost afterschool program, job readiness training, mentoring program for girls, a fitness walking club, and classes in computers, arts-and-crafts and dance.

Funded by Warner Bros. in cooperation with the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Los Angeles, the technology in the 100-seat theater room provides families with a welcoming, modern space to enjoy activities that include BAFTA-LA's well-attended film screenings hosted at Helen Keller Park.

Reflecting our strong commitment to energy efficiency, the new building is expected to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Due to extensive renovations underway at Helen Keller Park, most of its 6.6 acres of parkland are currently closed to the public.

Along with landscaping, those improvements, expected to be completed later this year, include a new baseball field, playground, exercise cluster, sports lighting system and park monument sign.

"The opening of the new Helen Keller Community Center is a milestone for the Department and the community served by this park," said Director Russ Guiney. "While much of the park will be under construction for the next several months, this state-of-the-art center will enable our dedicated staff, volunteers and partners to deliver high-quality programming to a wonderful and deserving community."

Special thanks go to Joe Mendoza, Mika Yamamoto, Melinda Roundtree, Earmer Carden, Melvin Pinkney, Mike Ealey, Debra Jones, Jackie Richardson, Yvette Mack, Jim Smith and Ben Johnson.

— Catarah Coleman

## NEW GATHERING PLACE

*At San Angelo Park, a new community building is home to a growing number of programs.*



On Saturday, April 25, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis joined the Department of Parks and Recreation to dedicate a new community center at San Angelo Park in La Puente.

Emceed by Latina Golfers Association founder Azucena Maldonado, the event drew hundreds of local residents to celebrate the opening of the 3,300 square-foot building, which is designed to provide a multi-purpose

space for a growing number of programs offered at the park.

Services now offered at the new center include a Tiny Tot program for children ages 2 to 5, as well as an afterschool club, cheerleading, ballet, and dance classes. Special thanks go to the following DPR staff: Frank Gonzales, Manuel Escobar, Anthony Montanez, Richard Chang, La Coya Pugh, Sofia Gavia and Tracy Anthony.

— Alba Ibarra

# CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY



*The Department's new Chief Lake Lifeguard looks to build on a tradition of excellence.*

Chris Graham has assumed the post of Chief Lake Lifeguard, bringing an accomplished career's worth of knowledge and insight to a key position in the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Graham — who began his lifeguarding career in the City of Newport Beach, and holds a master's degree in public administration — has been a Department employee since 2009. He previously served as superintendent of Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area.

"We are really thrilled to have Chris serving as Chief Lake Lifeguard for L.A. County Parks," said Regional Facilities Deputy Director Hayden Sohm, who is pictured pinning Graham's badge to his uniform. "Lifeguarding is his passion, and we feel he will bring enthusiasm and a strong work ethic to his new assignment."

Among Graham's goals: boosting professional development for the Department's lake lifeguards, enhancing and improving training protocols and continuing to work closely with staff to help educate park visitors about boat and watercraft safety. In an interview, he noted that he will emphasize issues of water safety and conservation, and will be a resource for all Department



personnel seeking advice on those and other issues.

When he isn't working, Chris enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter, swimming, traveling and camping in the desert.

"I look forward to making a positive contribution," said Graham. "Los Angeles County has wonderful lakes for recreation, and I am excited about continuing our tradition of putting safety first and providing a wonderful environment for all park visitors."

— Joyce Fitzpatrick



At the March 24 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, several Department staff joined Chief Deputy Director John Wicker in accepting a scroll for our role in the Countywide Fitness Challenge (CFC), in coordination with the Departments of Human Resources and Public Health. This year, our Department will host events at seven sites: Whittier Narrows Recreation Area (May 16), Castaic Lake State Recreation Area (June 20), Hacienda Heights Community Center (July 11), Hollywood Bowl (Aug. 8), Alondra Community Regional Park (Sept. 12), Placerita Canyon Nature Center (Sept. 26) and Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area (Oct. 17). More details can be found online at <http://dhr.lacounty.info>



## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT

**ANSWER**—These historic images were captured at the site of what is now Alondra Park —once open marshy fields used for agricultural purposes, and purchased from the Bank of Italy (now known as Bank of America) in 1927. Park development was underway eight years later, and a Public Works Administration (PWA) crew moved in as part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. The tents at the left rear of the image was where the service workers camped out during construction. The rustic craftsman-style bridge, likely spanning the Dominguez Channel, was a PWA project (note the person standing at the left of the bridge for scale). Later in 1937, the labor camp would use mules to excavate the land for the lake. — **Ansley B. Davies**

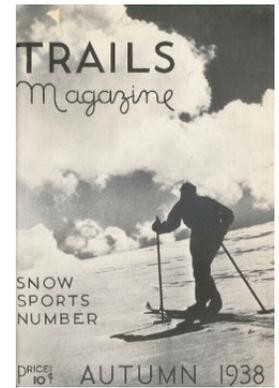
# Historic Trails Magazine Now Available

Back in 1934, the Department, formerly known as the Department of Recreation Camps and Playgrounds, began sponsoring its own quarterly publication, *Trails Magazine* in conjunction with a non-profit, the Mountain League of Southern California. The magazine, which was fully funded through advertising and subscriptions, was an important way for the Department to inform the public about all the wonderful recreation opportunities that were available in the mountain areas. The publication also carried the educational message of conservation, forest protection, and fire prevention. During the 1937-38 fiscal year, 10,625 copies of *Trails Magazine* were published and distributed with about 500 issues sent east of the Rocky Mountains and overseas. The magazine cost \$0.10 per issue.

The 540 acre Big Pines Recreation Camp opened in 1922 and was the facility that first established County Recreation. In the 1930's, there were two facilities in the Wrightwood area of the Angeles National Forest, Big Pines Camp and Crystal Lake Camp, so a magazine dedicated to trails and mountain recreation

was important. In 1940 and 1943, the Board of Supervisors did not renew the Forest Service's special use permits for Big Pines and Crystal Lake so the land these facilities occupied reverted to the Forest Service. Recreation programming, which included a very popular winter sports program, ceased because at the time the Forest Service did not provide recreation services.

For the first time, twenty-one magazines from 1934-1939 have been scanned and are now available to view in the Document's section of the Department's Trails Website, <http://trails.lacounty.gov/Documents>. If you would like to see the printed version of this publication, a bound volume of all the magazines is available at the Norwalk branch of the Los Angeles County Library. — *Ansley Davies*



## IN OUR NATURE

*Museum-style exhibits are unveiled at Placerita Canyon Nature Center, including displays depicting canyon ecosystems, freshwater aquarium, bird-viewing area and new animal enclosures.*



An eager crowd of more than 200 people turned out for the Feb. 25 opening of the revamped Placerita Canyon Nature Center, as a set of visually striking, museum-style exhibits made their public debut at the California state park managed by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Made possible in large part by a \$1 million grant from California State Parks, through the Prop. 84 Nature Education Facilities Program, the \$1.4 million project represents a significant overhaul of the nature center first built in 1971.

The upgrades — which add new and exciting dimensions to a facility devoted to educating the public about native animals, plants and natural resources — include large diorama displays depicting Placerita Canyon's three primary ecosystems; a wall-sized freshwater aquarium; a specially-designed bird-viewing area, featuring an observation deck and viewing scopes that allow visitors to watch wild birds along a nearby hillside; informative interpretive displays on native flora and fauna; renovated bird enclosures with a natural soil base; a room dedicated to native mammals; and the wall-to-wall mural "Daylight to Nocturnal," which serves as a colorful

backdrop for a collection of lifelike taxidermy animals that include a mountain lion.

Among those appearing at the grand opening was Los Angeles County Mayor Michael D. Antonovich, whose office provided \$465,000 toward the improvements. "In addition to providing our Santa Clarita Valley residents with a vital resource for learning and appreciation of wildlife and the environment, the \$1.4 million in improvements at the nature center help highlight the vital role Placerita Canyon plays in our efforts to preserve our County's diverse natural heritage," said Mayor Antonovich.

Additional improvements to the park property include a new roof and exterior restoration for historic Walker Cabin; new potable water system at Walker Ranch Campground; and Americans with Disabilities Act-accessibility for a pedestrian bridge.

As part of the grand opening event, representatives of the Tatavium Band of Mission Indians provided a traditional blessing of the land — which was inhabited by their ancestors beginning in ancient times, and has long been central to the region's cultural and natural history. It was in 1769 that the Portola

Expedition arrived in the Santa Clarita Valley — helping to bring about the mission era, which transformed this state in so many ways. Less than 100 years later, Francisco Lopez discovered gold in Placerita Canyon, ultimately leading to a rush of fortune-seekers throughout the state who gave birth to modern California.

Other speakers at the Wednesday morning gathering included Placerita Canyon Nature Associates President Jim Southwell, whose volunteer organization contributed close to \$30,000 for completion of conceptual and master plans for the renovations; and L.A. County Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney, who said the new-look nature center "tells a compelling story about the animals and plants that make L.A. County such a unique place to experience the beauty of the natural world. We look forward to welcoming visitors of all ages who can embrace these new opportunities for learning and fun."

Special thanks go to Hugo Maldonado, Kim Bosell, Russ Kimura, Faith Parducho, Francine Choi and our entire Grants team, Jane Beesley, Christopher Kinney, Ansley Davies, Chester Kano, Daniel Abratte, Kevin Kane, Kimel Conway and Mickey Long. — **Andre Herndon**

# TIP YOUR HAT



In our Department, we pride ourselves on coming to work each day in a spirit of service. It is matched only by an extraordinary work ethic that makes our employees second to none. To celebrate those values, we gathered April 30 at the beautiful Hacienda Heights Community Center for the 2015 Employee Awards Banquet.

Punctuated by a line-dancing session, the night's country-western theme motivated many to attend the event clad in their finest frontier gear, as tipped our collective cap to those who make us proud to work in the nation's finest park and recreation agency.

In this special section of Green Scene, we honor the winners and nominees — all chosen by our colleagues to represent the best in people, parks and programs that Los Angeles County has to offer.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO ...



Meliza Hernandez Accepting



### Teen PAD Night (East Agency)

Meliza Hernandez put on a PAD Teen Night at Loma Alta Park for 400 teens and 300 other youth and adults. More than 20 recreation staff worked tirelessly alongside 14 members of the Teen Club to tirelessly plan the event over months. Outreach to the community paid off big with food, games, and gaming trucks. A live radio deejay offered an hour and stayed the entire night. Sheriff's deputies kept participants safe inside and outside of the event and a few were even spotted dancing along to a song or two. This was a significant moment of community outreach that shows us all the power of teamwork.



Mari Roman accepting (pictured with Jackelyn Lukito)



### Honoring 75 Years of Val Verde's History (North Agency)

The small but proud town of Val Verde traces its roots to the Gold Rush, but when boom turned to bust, African American entrepreneur Sidney P. Dones saw an opportunity. In the pre-civil rights era, he established a resort community where the color of your skin could not stop you from going for a swim, dining out with your sweetheart or listening to jazz under the stars. Fifty acres were donated to the County for the creation of a park that has become a focal point for the community. Last year marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of the unquestioned hub for this culturally rich and diverse community.



### Peg Lee, Recreation Services Supervisor (North Agency)

Peg Lee has been with the Department for more than 30 years. One of her proudest accomplishments: working with the community to organize an annual art contest in recognition of Black History Month. Through this successful program, Peg has inspired thousands of young people to tap into their creative talents — by encouraging all of them, no matter what their ethnic background might be, to appreciate the legacy, achievements and contributions of African Americans. This program has always been run with the highest standards of quality and ethics, thanks to the passion and conviction that Peg brings to all that she does.

# SPECIAL AWARDS SECTION



Eric Richardson & Jimmy Mejia accepting



## North Construction

North Agency Construction workers put their heads together to design and build a bracket that makes it easier to lift, maneuver into place and install light poles using their Bobcat. With this attachment, they are able to more efficiently complete projects and assignments, and reduce expenses by cutting labor costs in half.



Amanda Pavia accepting



## Ringrove Park - Nutrition Collaboration (East Agency)

The Nutrition Collaboration between Cal Poly Pomona and Ringrove Park was established with the goal of teaching the importance of healthy eating to afterschool program participants. Each quarter, students from the nutrition program teach a one-hour program once a week for five weeks. The program promotes healthy eating habits, daily physical activity and is a preventative measure against childhood obesity.



Chris Elliott accepting



## Gabriel Fowler (East Agency)

As a Recreation Leader at Loma Alta Park in Altadena, Gabriel is involved in a variety of park programs from the Tiny Tot program to coaching sports. Gabriel is an integral part of the Loma Alta community garden, often taking young participants to the garden to assist the seniors, and teaching gardening techniques and teamwork. One of his most utilized talents is his artistic vision in creating remarkable videos, eye-catching flyers and brochures to promote park programs. His graphic designs skills are second to none!



## Robert Cruz (East Agency)

Robert Cruz began his County career in 2001 as a Grounds Maintenance Worker I with Beaches and Harbors. In 2008, Robert transferred from the North Agency to the East Agency. He was promoted a third time to Grounds Maintenance Supervisor. Robert leads by example and always handles his work efficiently and promptly. He has never wavered in his responsibilities to manage staff in a fair and consistent manner. Robert has had a positive effect on staff and employees, who have become more efficient under his leadership. His dedication and determination make him an important asset to the East Agency.



## Daniel Gonzales (South Agency)

Daniel has been providing safety trainings to help his co-workers avoid on-the-job accidents. He has reached out to vendors and manufacturers to come and assist in providing up-to-date information and techniques on operational functions for tools and equipment in which they operate. He provided classes and driver training for the operation of the agency's forklift, and made sure the new staff was properly trained. Daniel has been a very important part of providing certifications for operating equipment in the South Agency.



## Regina Bradley (North Agency)

When it comes to maximizing volunteer involvement, Regina Bradley is the cream of the crop. She prides herself on training new volunteers and making sure they are knowledgeable of all Department standards. Regina is also an expert in recruitment, managing to constantly recruit new volunteers with her friendly personality and encouraging patrons to give back to their community. She realizes the value of each and every volunteer, and makes sure they return and continue to invest in their community.

# SPECIAL AWARDS SECTION



**Valor  
Award**

## **Mike Timperio** (North Agency –not pictured)

On September 25, 2014, Mike saw a vehicle with smoke and flames coming out from under the hood. He also saw that there was an elderly woman in the vehicle, and tapped on the window to tell her to get out of the car. When she did not respond, he opened the door and assisted her to safety. He was able to put the fire out with his own vehicle's fire extinguisher, and another borrowed from a market. His quick thinking and bravery saved a life that day.



## **Elisa Salas** (East Agency)

On December 6, 2014, Elisa Salas opened her office door to see a man firing a gun at a park patron. She also saw a woman and her child frozen in terror on the nearby playground. Without regard for her own safety, Ms. Salas rushed to the playground and brought the lady and child to her office and locked the doors. She then remembered that the gymnasium was open, and again ran out to secure that building and the patrons inside. Sheriff's deputies arrived quickly, and the shooter ran off; but most importantly, no patrons were injured thanks to Elisa's brave actions.



## **Jesse Bautista** (North Agency)

While returning to North Agency Headquarters on Lake Hughes Road, Jesse came across a mudslide that had already trapped a pickup and a tractor trailer. Jesse assisted the pickup owner to safety and hooked up a chain to help pull the tractor out of the still-flowing mud. Jesse was able to provide updates to the Fire Department on deteriorating road conditions and ensured the safety of drivers in harm's way.



## **Miguel Felix** (South Agency)

On July 17, 2014, Miguel was setting up the trailer stage for Parks After Dark at Ted Watkins Park. When gunshots suddenly rang out, he ran to the aid of one of the three victims. Miguel applied direct pressure to the victim's wound, called police and stayed with the victim until relieved by authorities. Miguel went above and beyond the call of duty to save another life while in the line of fire.



**Valor  
Award**

## **Albert Trujillo** (North Agency—*not pictured*)

While working at Bassett Park, Albert was notified by a patron that a man was exposing himself in front of children by the exercise equipment. Albert asked park staff to call the police, but saw the man was walking toward the children on the playground. Albert intervened to keep the children safe, and helped detain the man until police arrived and arrested the suspect.

# HONORING EXCELLENCE

For those selected as our agencies' employees and programs of the year, honorees were selected from those recognized for monthly honors throughout 2015.



**Trevor Elliot**  
*Sr. Lake Lifeguard  
Regional Facilities*



**Eric Rische**  
*Carpenter  
North Agency*



**Schabarum Park Free  
Community Preparedness Fair**  
*Regional Facilities Agency*

Connie Douglas accepting

# SPECIAL AWARDS SECTION

SOUTH AGENCY



## **Tenesha Ware** *August Employee of the Month*

- January / Carl Dye
- February / Chris Elliot
- March / Floyd R. Bell Jr.
- April / Jennifer Vasquez
- May / Damian Guest
- June / Andrew Morales
- July / Connie Gutierrez
- September / Jesse Alvarado
- October / Juventino Moreno
- November / Brian Ceballos
- December / Daniel Gonzales



## **Khadija Ghouliane** *April Employee of the Month*

- January / Cruz Ocampo
- February / Jose Gomez
- March / Philip A. Robinson-Perkins
- May / Lynette Edmond
- June / Cristina Guevara
- July / Silvia Chavez
- August / Rashad Bryant
- September / Kathy Medina
- October / Wyvernia Brown
- November / Matthew Galbraith
- December / Toni Mclin



## **Hacienda Heights Community Center** *Facility of the Month*

- January / Washington Park
- February / Jesse Owens Park Dodger Dream Field
- March / Yvonne B. Burke Senior & Community Center
- April / Roosevelt Park Cinco de Mayo Celebration
- May / Enterprise Park
- June / Ladera/Monteith Parks
- July / Ted Watkins Park
- August / South Regional Swim Meet
- September / Adventure Park Concert in the Park
- October / Adult Crew
- December / Redevelopment of Helen Keller Park

Susan Brown accepting

EAST AGENCY



## **Abel Garnica** *October Employee of the Month*

- January / Robert Cruz
- February / Penny Daniels
- March / Lucius Crenshaw
- April / Blanca Montes
- May / Macedonio Rodriguez
- July / Timothy Blanco
- August / Susanna Ponciano
- September / Perry Smith
- November / Sam Estrada
- December / Gicel Zardeneta



## **Michelle Torres** *January Employee of the Month*

- February / Gabriel Fowler
- March / Peter Martinez Jr.
- April / Nicholas Bendy
- May / Veronica Herrera
- June / Matt Okeyo
- August / Natalie Vartanian
- September / Dana Garcia
- October / Teddy Mauleon
- November / Ralph Crowder
- December / Joseph Anthony Torres



## **Arcadia Park "A Tribute to Veterans & Families"**

- January / City Terrace Park
- February / Valleydale Park CDBG Afterschool Program
- March / Loma Alta Park—Farmers Market
- May / Saybrook Park
- July / Belvedere Civic Center
- August / Ringrove Park Tiny Tot
- September / Salazar Park
- November / Construction Division Project Management Team
- December / Artz 4 Youth Clothes Line Project

Albert Gomez & Lorraine Martinez accepting

# SPECIAL AWARDS SECTION

NORTH AGENCY



## **Gabino Boyas** *March Employee of the Month*

- January / Sandra Chapman
- February / Leah Ferrassoli
- April / Debra Herzer
- May / Steve Dennis
- June / Gloria Serpas
- July / Eric Rische
- August / Donald Harper
- September / John Gallardo
- October / Alba Amaya-Recinos
- November / Lanisha Smith
- December / Rebecca Viramontes



Ricky Salazar accepting



## **Tabrek Seyssel** *March Employee of the Month*

- January / Ricky Castillo
- February / Antonio Neal
- April / Ashley Johnson
- May / David Berk
- June / Sabrina Vitozruz
- July / Katie Cowell
- August / Alexis Kearns
- September / Salvador Gomez
- October / Erik Elias
- November / Darwin Lorenzo
- December / Jon Maxey



Alicia Garcia & Jim McCarthy accepting



## **El Cariso Park Phase II Improvement Dedication** *December Facility/Program of the Month*

- January / Sorensen Park Christmas Tree Lighting
- February / Val Verde Afterschool Homework Club
- March / Stephen Sorensen Park Fitness Express
- April / Stephen Sorensen Healthy Parks Fair
- May / El Cariso Park & Gymnasium
- June / Capture the Color 5K Run/Walk
- July / Jr. Frogman
- August / Knollwood Pool
- September / El Cariso Park Invitational Cross Country Meet
- October / North Agency Blood Drive
- November / George Lane Halloween Fall Festival
- December / El Cariso Phase II Improvement Dedication

REGIONALS AGENCY



## **Grace Perez** *September Employee of the Month*

- January / Rod Lizema
- March / Dina Jesup
- July / Tom Loria
- August / Debbie Pepe
- October / Micah Bivens
- November / Ricky Miller
- December / Darlene Lackey



## **Wayne Smith** *November Employee of the Month*

- January / Tony Pearson
- April / Bre MacLennan
- May / Christopher Scharrer
- June / Carl Anderson
- July / Trevor Elliot
- October / Wayne Smith
- December / Jessica Tresieras



Samuel Abeyta accepting



## **Carpentry & Concrete Crew** *August Facility/Program of the Month*

- March / San Dimas Canyon Nature Center
- June / Hollywood Bowl
- July / Santa Fe Dam Junior Guards
- September / Schabarum Park Free Community Emergency Preparedness Fair
- December / Deane Dana Friendship Park and Nature Center

# SPECIAL AWARDS SECTION



Bertha Ruiz-Hofman accepting



**Changmii Bae** *September Employee of the Month*



**Sandy Bustamante** *June Employee of the Month*



**Management Services**



# DRAWING ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE

At a park named for a giant of history, a special art contest helps young people express themselves.

As the nation paused in February to reflect on the many contributions that African-Americans have made to our history and culture, the annual Black History Art Contest at Los Angeles County's Jackie Robinson Park showed that it has grown into a highlight of the month in Littlerock, Calif.

Held this year on Feb. 18, the event invites Keppel Union School District students from kindergarten through eighth grade to contribute original works of art depicting significant figures in black history. Members of the local community are then invited to vote on their favorites among well over 1,000 pieces of art displayed at the park. The final selections are evaluated by a panel of judges — with first, second and third-place awarded in four age groups.

Many submissions depicted the park's namesake, who broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball. Others honored figures ranging from the heroic Harriet Tubman, who freed slaves on the Underground Railroad, to present-day astrophysicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson.

While artistic skills may vary among the contest submissions, what is important about the Jackie Robinson Park Black History Art Contest is the inspiration it brings to the participating young people. They can also achieve great things, and perhaps one day be the subject of a kindergartner's drawing of a great man or woman.

Eleventh-grader Jaraun Griggs — a member of the Littlerock High School African-American Males Club, whose members were tapped to judge the art contest — said it was vital that younger children know about the contributions of African-Americans and “understand the importance of Black history, of where we came from and where we are trying to go.” — *Heather Larson*



## How your work is making lives better across Los Angeles County



Hundreds of families came to **Saybrook Park** on April 11, as Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis and the Department united the community for a free celebration of *Día de los Niños*, a traditional Mexican celebration that sets aside time to celebrate children, family and Latino culture.



On March 25 at **El Cariso Community Park**, an Obesity Awareness Walk drew more than 160 participants, as members of the community got together to demonstrate their commitment to fitness and draw attention to a growing health crisis.



At the monthly food bank hosted at **Roosevelt Park**, the Department reaches out to the community and lends a helping hand by providing about 250 local seniors with bags full of free groceries.



Afterschool program kids at **Rowland Heights Park** take it old-school with a lively round of Simon Says -- a classic game that is lots of fun and helps keep them active!



Colored chalk, flying all around: As part of a March 28 health fair hosted at **Stephen Sorensen Park**, more than 270 people participated in the Color Me Lake L.A. Fun Run/Walk.

## When 9,000 miles away is right next door

#ParksMakeLifeBetter

Though the planet we live on may often seem unfathomably large, we sometimes experience moments that underscore just how small it can be. Like, for example, when a T-shirt from an annual fishing derby at Cerritos Community Regional Park, sponsored by Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, is found on a girl in Uganda.

What makes the world seem even smaller? As demonstrated by the backstory of this photograph, it is frequently pure coincidence: Posing with the young girl is Shannon Abdulwahab, a 4th District resident who met her in April while on a medical mission to the Otino-Waa orphanage in Lira, Uganda.

Sponsored by Cottonwood Church in Los Alamitos, “the purpose of this trip was to provide vision screenings and care to the children and teachers of this orphanage and the surrounding community,” said Abdulwahab. Over the course of five days, the 11-woman team screened almost 700 patients, distributed about 200 pairs of eyeglasses and identified 20 people who will receive needed cataract surgery later this year.

“The most amazing thing about this trip wasn't giving sight to the blind ... it was seeing that, despite having next to nothing, these kids had so much hope — and with hope comes happiness,” she said. “They had huge smiles. Every time I looked at them I felt hopeful and happy and I just knew everything would be okay.

“I saw the little girl wearing the Don Knabe shirt on our last day at

the orphanage. ... I literally could not believe my eyes. In that moment, I felt like I was truly meant to be at Otino-Waa and I had all of Southern California behind me. But then I went to the girl to ask for a picture. After the picture, I asked what her name was. Her name is Hope. It still gives me chills.”

It is unclear how Hope came to possess a memento from the 2009 Family Fishing Derby, though Abdulwahab noted that Otino-Waa is supported by a number of churches in the 4th District. It is likely that its original owner outgrew the shirt and donated it — not realizing that this token of a great day at an L.A. County park would wind up on the other side of the world. — Heather Larson & Andre Herndon



## ON YouTube



There are just a couple of things aquatic exercise is good for: mind and body. Public Information Assistants Heather Larson and Catarah Hampshire took their cameras to early-morning aqua aerobics classes to parks on opposite ends of L.A. County, and found thriving programs with dedicated staff and patrons who can't stop raving about the benefits.

**Castaic Sports Complex Aquatic Center:** <http://bit.ly/1bS7iX>

**Jesse Owens Community Regional Park:** <http://bit.ly/1F2JRRQ>

PROMOTIONS WITHIN

THE DEPARTMENT OF

# MOVES

**Maria Chavez**, Recreation Services Supervisor - East Agency

**Shui King Kam**, Administrative Services Manager I -  
Administrative Services Agency

**Karla Latin**, Administrative Assistant III - Administrative Services Agency

**Cruz Ocampo**, Pool Manager - South Agency

**Aram Pirjanian**, Administrative Assistant II – Executive Office

**Steven Rios**, Recreation Services Leader - South Agency

**Carmen Riquelme**, Pool Manager - North Agency

**Joseph Ruvalcaba**, Grounds Maintenance Worker II -  
Regional Facilities Agency

**Sophy Sam, Sr.** General Maintenance Worker - East Agency

**Gloria Serpas**, Staff Assistant II - North Agency

**Julian Serrano**, Grounds Maintenance Worker I - Regional Facilities Agency

**Natalie Vartanian**, Recreation Services Leader - North Agency

**Rene Zaragoza**, Grounds Maintenance Worker I - Regional Facilities Agency

## 20 YEARS



Mark Ladd  
Regional Facilities Agency



Yvette Maufas  
South Agency



Dennis Miller  
Regional Facilities Agency



Xavier Miranda  
East Agency



Frank Moreno  
Planning & Development Agency



Donald Harper  
North Agency



Gabriel Herrera  
Special Operations



Kathy Jiles  
South Agency



Darlene Lackey  
Regional Facilities Agency



Norma Morseburg  
Planning & Development Agency

## 25 YEARS



Leila Sharma  
Executive Office



Samuel L. Adams Jr.  
South Agency

## 30 YEARS



Cathy Carrillo-Cox  
Administrative Services



Melinda Roundtree  
South Agency



Linda Bello  
Regional Park & Open Space District



Manuel Escobar  
East Agency



Anthony Guajardo  
South Agency



Grace Perez  
Regional Facilities Agency



Everlean Wright  
South Agency



Jesse Yee  
Administrative Services Agency

## 35 YEARS



Judy Benavidez  
North Agency



Kaye Michelson  
Executive Office



John Wicker  
Executive Office

## 40 YEARS



Gonzalo Chacon  
North Agency



Gregory Hamilton  
South Agency



Martin Markham  
Regional Facilities Agency



Jose Padilla  
Regional Facilities Agency



## JOURNEY TO THE BOWL

On May 5, Los Angeles County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl was a special guest at the Hollywood Bowl 2015 Summer Season Party, where other speakers included Los Angeles Philharmonic Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel; and members of the legendary rock band Journey, who were inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Walk of Fame and will headline the Bowl's opening night this year.

## HIGH FIVE

RECOGNIZING YOUR SERVICE  
TO THE COMMUNITY

Thank you so much for supporting the first of what we trust will be an annual *El Grande Fondo* on Oct. 18, 2014. Everyone had a smashing time. The food was good, the support was awesome and you just can't beat that view!

We had 74 participants and 20 volunteers enjoying the great LA fall weather. More good news we had zero incidents or accidents on the roadways.

The pit stops were heavenly, with breakfast burritos, empanadas, cookies, chocolate milk — everything our tremendous athletes needed to climb through the gorgeous Angeles Forest all the way to the top of Mt. Wilson.

After the ride, the massage therapists were such godsend to the aching champions! Hungry cyclists feasted on a sumptuous

Mexican banquet courtesy of *La Cabañita* and washed down with refreshing Jarritos. Amazing prizes like helmets, state-of-the-art bike lights from Incycle, bike racks from Hollywood Racks, party from Angel City Brewery and really beautiful climbing gear from Patagonia were awarded to our top 4 cyclists. All in all, the ride was so successful that we anticipate tripling our participation next year.

When you support *El Grande Fondo*, you are supporting the revitalization of the Angeles Forest and you are also helping us in our mission to make all of LA County healthy, safe and fun for bikes. *Muchas gracias!*

**JJ Hoffman,**  
Events and Business Affairs Director, LACBC  
(sent to Abel Garnica, Crescenta Valley Park)

I am writing this letter to give a long overdue and extremely deserved commendation to one of your Recreation Services Leaders, Jessica Haley, at Castaic Sports Complex. Jessica is a public servant who consistently goes above and beyond her regular duties to ensure that the Castaic sports programs are first-class programs that promote growth, fun, involvement, and competitiveness.



I have been involved with the Castaic Sports Complex for over four years now. Many issues have arisen and Jessica has never once let me down. She is a true professional who does everything in her power to resolve any problem that may arise. She is more than a problem-solver, though. She is a caring and thoughtful individual who gives her absolute best effort at her job — and it shows.

The programs Jessica Haley runs at Castaic constantly exceed one's expectations of a "Parks and Rec" program. From Opening Day to All-Star teams, I am always impressed. I am not easily impressed, as I have been involved in club teams and high school athletics my whole life. I am an educator and coach by profession, and have high expectations of things that are related to those fields.

Recently Jessica resolved yet another issue that arose for me and she did not have to. The jerseys for my flag football team were made the wrong color by the vendor. Flag football season is short and I was not expecting to get this resolved — but it did and was resolved quickly and professionally. I would like to wholeheartedly recognize and applaud the outstanding work of Jessica Haley, Recreation Services Leader for the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Sincerely,  
**Jeremy Perkins**

The Scouting program in the Santa Clarita Valley has, and continues to, benefit greatly through the support of William S. Hart Park and the people who manage it. Campouts and other outdoor events are critical in providing advancement opportunities, fun and learning for our Scouts. We appreciate your

assistance in making the park facilities open to our scouts!

We appreciate your support of scouting and wanted to inform you that your organization has been chosen to receive a Community Organizations of the Year Award for your service in scouting.

It is leaders like you that help make Scouting a great program helping our youth grow up to be great people who are prepared to service and lead others.

Sincerely,  
**Phil Schramm**, *Committee Chairman*  
Boy Scouts of America  
Western Los Angeles County Council-Bill Hart District  
(Sent to Norman Phillips at William S. Hart Regional Park)

**A**bel, we are very grateful for all. This is a little something for the moment, we are not done. Finding another word to say thank you, was a little tough. So I thought I'd keep these same words and just display them differently, to give the words thank you, more of a personal meaning. This thank you is to you and your staff. The message is a bit informal, but it's from the heart, here goes...

- T** Terrific: that is you and your Team
  - H** Hard Workers: not one of you stopped
  - A** Able: whatever the need, it was done
  - N** Nice: everyone was a Professional, no matter the situation
  - K** Key: all of you hold this, the care & success of the Park stayed safe
  - Y** You!: Stars, the light you carry, helped brighten the paths
  - O** Open: your minds found solutions
  - U** Up: your future, the lifts given to others, will be coming back to you
- Thank you for letting me share my thoughts and those of the California Council of the Blind, Mutt Strut Committee.

Sincerely,  
**Debbie Cordero**



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*Director*

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